



Life of the Buddha

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Though the Pali texts do not give the story of the Buddha's life in a connected form, they do give us details about many important events in it and they offer a picture of the world in which he moved. The idea of biography was unknown to the older Indian literature. The Brâhmanas and Upanishads tell us of the beliefs and practices of their sages, the doctrines they taught and the sacrifices they offered, but they rarely give even an outline of their lives. And whenever the Hindus write about a man of religion or a philosopher, their weak historical sense and their strong feeling for the importance of the teaching lead them to neglect the figure of the teacher and present a portrait which seems to us dim and impersonal. Indian saints are distinguished by what they said, not by what they did and it is a strong testimony to Gotama's individuality and force of character, that in spite of the centuries which separate us from him and the misty unreal atmosphere which in later times hangs round his name, his personality is more distinct and lifelike than that of many later teachers.

Most of the stories of his youth and childhood have a mythical air and make their first appearance in works composed long after his death, but there is no reason to distrust the traditional accounts of his lineage. He was the son of Suddhodana of the Kshatriya clan known as Sâkya or Sâkiya. In later literature his father is usually described as a king but this statement needs qualification. The Sâkyas were a small aristocratic republic. At the time of the Buddha's birth they recognized the suzerainty of the neighbouring kingdom of Kosala or Oudh and they were subsequently annexed by it, but, so long as they were independent, all that we know of their government leads us to suppose that they were not a monarchy like Kosala and Magadha. The political and administrative business of the clan was transacted by an assembly which met in a council hall at Kapilavatthu. Its president was styled Râjâ but we do not know how he was selected nor for how long he held office. The Buddha's father is sometimes spoken of as Râjâ, sometimes as if he were a simple citizen. Some scholars think the position was temporary and elective. But in any case it seems clear that he was not a Mahârâjâ like Ajâtasattu and other monarchs of the period. He was a prominent member of a wealthy and aristocratic family rather than a despot. In some passages, Brahmins are represented as discussing the Buddha's claims to respect. It is said that he is of a noble and wealthy family but not that he is the son of a king or heir to the throne, though the statement, if true, would be so obvious and appropriate that its omission is sufficient to disprove it. The point is of psychological importance, for the later literature in its desire to emphasize the sacrifice made by the Buddha exaggerates the splendour and luxury by which he was surrounded in youth and produces the impression that his temperament was something like that reflected in the book of Ecclesiastes, the weary calm, bred of satiety and disenchantment, of one who has possessed everything and found everything to be but vanity. But this is not the dominant note of the Buddha's discourses as we have them. He condemns the pleasures and ambitions of the world as unsatisfying, but he stands before us as one who has resisted and vanquished temptation rather than as a disillusioned pleasure-seeker. The tone of these sermons accords perfectly with the supposition, supported by whatever historical data we possess, that he belonged to a fighting aristocracy, active in war

and debate, wealthy according to the standard of the times and yielding imperfect obedience to the authority of kings and priests. The Pitakas allude several times to the pride of the Sâkyas, and in spite of the gentleness and courtesy of the Buddha this family trait is often apparent in his attitude, in the independence of his views, his calm disregard of Brahmanic pretensions and the authority that marks his utterances.

The territory of the Sâkyas lay about the frontier which now divides Nepal from the United Provinces, between the upper Rapti and the Gandak rivers, a hundred miles or so to the north of Benares. The capital was called Kapilavasthu, and the mention of several other towns in the oldest texts indicates that the country was populous. Its wealth was derived chiefly from rice-fields and cattle. The uncultivated parts were covered with forest and often infested by robbers. The spot where the Buddha was born was known as the Lumbini Park and the site, or at least what was supposed to be the site in Asoka's time, is marked by a pillar erected by that monarch at a place now called Rummidei. His mother was named Mâyâ and was also of the Sâkyas. Tradition states that she died seven days after his birth and that he was brought up by her sister, Mahâprajāpatī, who was also a wife of Suddhodana. The names of other relatives are preserved, but otherwise the older documents tell us nothing of his childhood and the copious legends of the later church seem to be poetical embellishments. The Sutta-Nipâta contains the story of an aged seer named Asita who came to see the child and, much like Simeon, prophesied his future greatness but wept that he himself must die before hearing the new gospel.

The personal name of the Buddha was Siddhârtha in Sanskrit or Siddhattha in Pali, meaning he who has achieved his object, but it is rarely used. Persons who are introduced in the Pitakas as addressing him directly either employ a title or call him Gotama (Sanskrit Gautama). This was the name of his *gotra* or gens and roughly corresponds to a surname, being less comprehensive than the clan name Sâkyas. The name Gotama is applied in the Pitakas to other Sâkyas such as the Buddha's father and his cousin Ānanda. It is said to be still in use in India and has been borne by many distinguished Hindus. But since it seemed somewhat irreverent to speak of the Buddha merely by his surname, it became the custom to describe him by titles. The most celebrated of these is the word Buddha itself, the awakened or wise one. But in Pali works he is described just as frequently by the name of Bhagavâ or the Lord. The titles of Śâkyas-Muni and Śâkyas-Simha have also passed into common use and the former is his usual designation in the Sanskrit sūtras. The word Tathâgata, of somewhat obscure signification, is frequently found as an equivalent of Buddha and is put into the mouth of Gotama himself as a substitute for the first personal pronoun.

We can only guess what was the religious and moral atmosphere in which the child grew up. There were certainly Brahmans in the Sâkyas territory: everyone had heard of their Vedic lore, their ceremonies and their claims to superiority. But it is probable that their influence was less complete here than further west and that even before this time they encountered a good deal of scepticism and independent religious sentiment. This may have been in part military impatience of priestly pedantry, but if the Sâkyas were not submissive sheep, their waywardness was not due to want of interest in religion. A frequent phrase in the Buddha's discourses speaks of the "highest goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen leave their homes and go forth into homelessness." The religious mendicant seemed the proper incarnation of this ideal to which Kshatriyas as well as Brahmans aspired, and we are justified in supposing that the future Buddha's thoughts would naturally turn towards the wandering life. The legend represents him as carefully secluded from all disquieting sights and as learning the existence of old age, sickness and death only by chance encounters which left a profound impression. The older texts do not emphasize this view of his mental development, though they do not preclude it. It is stated incidentally that his parents regretted his abandonment of worldly life and it is natural to suppose that they may have tried to turn his mind to secular interests and pleasures. His son, Râhula, is mentioned several times in the Pitakas but his wife only once and then not by name but as "the princess who was the mother of Râhula." His separation from her becomes in the later legend the theme of an affecting tale but the scanty allusions to his family found in the Pitakas are devoid of sentimental touches. A remarkable passage is preserved in the Anguttara

Nikâya describing his feelings as a young man and may be the origin of the story about the four visions of old age, sickness, death and of peace in the religious life. After describing the wealth and comfort in which he lived, he says that he reflected how people feel repulsion and disgust at the sight of old age, sickness and death. But is this right? "I also" he thought "am subject to decay and am not free from the power of old age, sickness and death. Is it right that I should feel horror, repulsion and disgust when I see another in such plight? And when I reflected thus, my disciples, all the joy of life which there is in life died within me."

No connected account of his renunciation of the world has been found in the Pitakas but people are represented as saying that in spite of his parents' grief he "went out from the household life into the homeless state" while still a young man. Accepted tradition, confirmed by the Mahâparinibbâna Sutta, says that he retired from worldly life when he was twenty-nine years old. The event is also commemorated in a poem of the Sutta-Nipâta which reads like a very ancient ballad.

It relates how Bimbisâra, King of Magadha, looking out from his palace, saw an unknown ascetic, and feeling he was no ordinary person went himself to visit him. It would appear from this that Gotama on leaving his family went down to the plains and visited Râjagaha, the capital of Magadha, now Rajgîr to the south of Patna. The teachers of the Ganges valley had probably a greater reputation for learning and sanctity than the rough wits of the Sâkyâ land and this may have attracted Gotama. At any rate he applied himself diligently to acquire what knowledge could be learned from contemporary teachers of religion. We have an account put into his own mouth of his experiences as the pupil of Alâra Kâlâma and Uddaka Râmaputta but it gives few details of his studies. It would appear however that they both had a fixed system (dhamma) to impart and that their students lived in religious discipline (vinaya) as members of an Order. They were therefore doing exactly what the Buddha himself did later on a larger scale and with more conspicuous success. The instruction, we gather, was oral. Gotama assimilated it thoroughly and rapidly but was dissatisfied because he found that it did not conduce to perfect knowledge and salvation. He evidently accepted his teachers' general ideas about belief and conduct—a dhamma, a vinaya, and the practice of meditation—but rejected the content of their teaching as inadequate. So he went away.

The European mystic knows the dangers of Quietism. When Molinos and other quietists praise the Interior Silence in which the soul neither speaks nor desires nor thinks, they suggest that the suspension of all mental activity is good in itself. But more robust seekers hold that this "orison of quiet" is merely a state of preparation, not the end of the quest, and valuable merely because the soul recuperates therein and is ready for further action. Some doctrine akin to that of the quietists seems to underlie the mysterious old phrases in which the Buddha's two teachers tried to explain their trances, and he left them for much the same reasons as led the Church to condemn Quietism. He did not say that the trances are bad; indeed he represented them as productive of happiness in a sense which Europeans can hardly follow. But he clearly refused to admit that they were the proper end of the religious life. He felt there was something better and he set out to find it.

The interval between his abandonment of the world and his enlightenment is traditionally estimated at seven years and this accords with our other data. But we are not told how long he remained with his two teachers nor where they lived. He says however that after leaving them he wandered up and down the land of Magadha, so that their residence was probably in or near that district. He settled at a place called Uruvelâ. "There" he says "I thought to myself, truly this is a pleasant spot and a beautiful forest. Clear flows the river and pleasant are the bathing places: all around are meadows and villages." Here he determined to devote himself to the severest forms of asceticism. The place is in the neighbourhood of Bodh-Gaya, near the river now called Phalgu or Lilañja but formerly Nerañjara. The fertile fields and gardens, the flights of steps and temples are modern additions but the trees and the river still give the sense of repose and inspiration which Gotama felt, an influence alike calming to the senses and stimulating to the mind. Buddhism, though in theory setting no value on the pleasures of the eye, is not in practice disdainful of beauty, as witness the many allusions to the Buddha's personal appearance, the

persistent love of art, and the equally persistent love of nature which is found in such early poems as the Theragâthâ and still inspires those who select the sites of monasteries throughout the Buddhist world from Burma to Japan. The example of the Buddha, if we may believe the story, shows that he felt the importance of scenery and climate in the struggle before him and his followers still hold that a holy life is led most easily in beautiful and peaceful landscapes.

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Hitherto we have found allusions to the events of the Buddha's life rather than consecutive statements and narratives but for the next period, comprising his struggle for enlightenment, its attainment and the commencement of his career as a teacher, we have several accounts, both discourses put into his own mouth and narratives in the third person like the beginning of the Mahāvagga. It evidently was felt that this was the most interesting and critical period of his life and for it, as for the period immediately preceding his death, the Pitakas provide the elements of a biography. The accounts vary as to the amount of detail and supernatural events which they contain, but though the simplest is perhaps the oldest, it does not follow that events consistent with it but only found in other versions are untrue. One cannot argue that anyone recounting his spiritual experiences is bound to give a biographically complete picture. He may recount only what is relevant to the purpose of his discourse.

Gotama's ascetic life at Uruvelâ is known as the wrestling or struggle for truth. The story, as he tells it in the Pitakas, gives no dates, but is impressive in its intensity and insistent iteration. Fire, he thought to himself, cannot be produced from damp wood by friction, but it can from dry wood. Even so must the body be purged of its humours to make it a fit receptacle for illumination and knowledge. So he began a series of terrible fasts and sat "with set teeth and tongue pressed against the palate" until in this spiritual wrestling the sweat poured down from his arm pits. Then he applied himself to meditation accompanied by complete cessation of breathing, and, as he persevered and went from stage to stage of this painful exercise, he heard the blood rushing in his head and felt as if his skull was being split, as if his belly were being cut open with a butcher's knife, and finally as if he were thrown into a pit of burning coals. Elsewhere he gives further details of the horrible penances which he inflicted on himself. He gradually reduced his food to a grain of rice each day. He lived on seeds and grass, and for one period literally on dung. He wore haircloth or other irritating clothes: he plucked out his hair and beard: he stood continuously: he lay upon thorns. He let the dust and dirt accumulate till his body looked like an old tree. He frequented a cemetery—that is a place where corpses were thrown to decay or be eaten by birds and beasts—and lay among the rotting bodies.

But no enlightenment, no glimpse into the riddle of the world came of all this, so, although he was nearly at death's door, he determined to abstain from food altogether. But spirits appeared and dissuaded him, saying that if he attempted thus to kill himself they would nourish him by infusing a celestial elixir through his skin and he reflected that he might as well take a little food. So he took a palmful or two of bean soup. He was worn almost to a shadow, he says. "When I touched my belly, I felt my backbone through it and when I touched my back, I felt my belly—so near had my back and my belly come together through this fasting. And when I rubbed my limbs to refresh them the hair fell off." Then he reflected that he had reached the limit of self-mortification and yet attained no enlightenment. There must be another way to knowledge. And he remembered how once in his youth he had sat in the shade of a rose apple tree and entered into the stage of contemplation known as the first rapture. That, he now thought, must be the way to enlightenment: why be afraid of such bliss? But to attain it, he must have more strength and to get strength he must eat. So he ate some rice porridge. There were five monks living near him, hoping that when he found the Truth he would tell it to them. But when they saw that he had begun to take food, their faith failed and they went away.

The Buddha then relates how, having taken food, he began to meditate and passed through four stages of contemplation, culminating in pure self-possession and equanimity, free alike from all feeling of pain or ease. Such meditation was nothing miraculous but supposed to be

within the power of any trained ascetic. Then there arose before him a vision of his previous births, the hundreds of thousands of existences with all their details of name, family and caste through which he had passed. This was succeeded by a second and wider vision in which he saw the whole universe as a system of karma and reincarnation, composed of beings noble or mean, happy or unhappy, continually "passing away according to their deeds," leaving one form of existence and taking shape in another. Finally, he understood the nature of error and of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. "In me thus set free the knowledge of freedom arose and I knew 'Rebirth has been destroyed, the higher life has been led; what had to be done has been done, I have no more to do with this world.' This third knowledge came to me in the last watch of the night: ignorance was destroyed, knowledge had arisen, darkness was destroyed, light had arisen, as I sat there earnest, strenuous, resolute."

On attaining enlightenment he at first despaired of preaching the truth to others. He reflected that his doctrine was abstruse and that mankind are given over to their desires. How can such men understand the chain of cause and effect or teaching about Nirvana and the annihilation of desire? So he determined to remain quiet and not to preach. Then the deity Brahmâ Sahampati appeared before him and besought him to preach the Truth, pleading that some men could understand. The Buddha surveyed the world with his mind's eye and saw the different natures of mankind. "As in a pool of lotuses, blue, red or white, some lotuses born in the water, grown up in the water, do not rise above the water but thrive hidden under the water and other lotuses, blue, red or white, born in the water, grown up in the water, reach to the surface: and other lotuses, blue, red or white, born in the water, grown up in the water, stand up out of the water and the water does not touch them." Thus did he perceive the world to be and he said to Brahmâ "The doors of immortality are open. Let them that have ears to hear, show faith."

Then he began to wonder to whom he should first preach his doctrine, and he thought of his former teachers. But a spirit warned him that they had recently died. Then he thought of the five monks who had tended him during his austerities but left him when he ceased to fast. By his superhuman power of vision he perceived that they were living at Benares in the deer park, Isipatana. So, after remaining awhile at Uruvelâ he started to find them and on the way met a naked ascetic, in answer to whose enquiries he proclaimed himself as the Buddha; "I am the Holy One in this world, I am the highest teacher, I alone am the perfect supreme Buddha, I have gained calm and nirvana, I go to Benares to set moving the wheels of righteousness. I will beat the drum of immortality in the darkness of this world." But the ascetic replied. "It may be so, friend," shook his head, took another road and went away, with the honour of being the first sceptic.

When the Buddha reached the deer park, a wood where ascetics were allowed to dwell and animals might not be killed, the five monks saw him coming and determined not to salute him since he had given up his exertions, and turned to a luxurious life. But as he drew near they were overawed and in spite of their resolution advanced to meet him, and brought water to wash his feet. While showing him this honour they called him Friend Gotama but he replied that it was not proper to address the Tathâgata thus. He had become a Buddha and was ready to teach them the Truth but the monks demurred saying that if he had been unable to win enlightenment while practising austerities, he was not likely to have found it now that he was living a life of ease. But he overcame their doubts and proceeded to instruct them, apparently during some days, for we are told that they went out to beg alms.

Can this account be regarded as in any sense historical, as being not perhaps the Buddha's own words but the reminiscences of some one who had heard him describe the crisis of his life? Like so much of the Pitakas the narrative has an air of patchwork. Many striking passages, such as the descriptions of the raptures through which he passed, occur in other connections but the formulæ are ancient and their use here may be as early and legitimate as elsewhere. In its main outlines the account is simple, unpretentious and human. Gotama seeks to obtain enlightenment by self-mortification: finds that this is the wrong way: tries a more natural method and succeeds: debates whether he shall become a teacher and at first hesitates. These are not features which the average Indian hagiographer, anxious to prove his hero omnipotent and omniscient, would

invent or emphasize. Towards the end of the narrative the language is more majestic and the compiler introduces several stanzas, but though it is hardly likely that Gotama would have used these stanzas in telling his own story, they may be ancient and in substance authentic. The supernatural intervention recorded is not really great. It amounts to this, that in mental crises the Buddha received warnings somewhat similar to those delivered by the dæmon of Socrates. The appearance of Brahmâ Sahampati is related with more detail and largely in verse, which suggests that the compiler may have inserted some legend which he found ready to hand, but on the whole I am inclined to believe that in this narrative we have a tradition not separated from the Buddha by many generations and going back to those who had themselves heard him describe his wrestling to obtain the Truth and his victory.

Other versions of the enlightenment give other incidents which are not rendered less credible by their omission from the narrative quoted, for it is clearly an epitome put together for a special didactic purpose. But still the story as related at the beginning of the Mahâvagga of the Vinaya has a stronger smack of mythology than the passages quoted from the Sutta-Pitaka. In these last the Bodhi-tree is mentioned only incidentally, which is natural, for it is a detail which would impress later piety rather than the Buddha himself. But there is no reason to be sceptical as to the part it has played in Buddhist history. Even if we had not been told that he sat under a tree, we might surmise that he did so, for to sit under a tree or in a cave was the only alternative for a homeless ascetic. The Mahâvagga states that after attaining Buddhahood he sat crosslegged at the foot of the tree for seven days uninterruptedly, enjoying the bliss of emancipation, and while there thought out the chain of causation which is only alluded to in the suttas quoted above. He also sat under three other trees, seven days under each. Heavy rain came on but Mucalinda, the king of the serpents, “came out of his abode and seven times encircled the body of the Lord with his windings and spread his great hood over the Lord’s head.” Here we are in the domain of mythology: this is not a vignette from the old religious life on the banks of the Nerañjara but a work of sacred art: the Holy Supreme Buddha sitting immovable and imperturbable in the midst of a storm sheltered by the folds of some pious monster that the artist’s fancy has created.

The narrative quoted from the Majjhima-Nikâya does not mention that the Buddha during his struggle for enlightenment was assailed or tempted by Mâra, the personification of evil and of transitory pleasures but also of death. But that such an encounter—in some respects analogous to the temptation of Christ by the Devil—formed part of the old tradition is indicated by several passages in the Pitakas and not merely by the later literature where it assumes a prominent and picturesque form. This struggle is psychologically probable enough but the origin of the story, which is exhaustively discussed in Windisch’s *Buddha und Mâra*, seems to lie not so much in any account which the Buddha may have given of his mental struggles as in amplifications of old legends and in dramatizations of metaphors which he may have used about conquering death.

The Bodhi-tree is still shown at Bodh-Gaya. It stands on a low terrace behind the temple, the whole lying in a hollow, below the level of the surrounding modern buildings, and still attracts many pilgrims from all Buddhist lands though perhaps not so many as the tree at Anuradhapura in Ceylon, which is said to be sprung from one of its branches transplanted thither. Whatever title it may have to the reverence of the faithful rests on lineage rather than identity, for the growth which we see at Bodh-Gaya now cannot claim to be the branches under which the Buddha sat or even the trunk which Asoka tended. At best it is a modern stem sprung from the seeds of the old tree, and this descent is rendered disputable by legends of its destruction and miraculous restoration. Even during the time that Sir A. Cunningham knew the locality from 1862 to 1880 it would seem that the old trunk decayed and was replaced by scions grown from seed.

The texts quoted above leave the Buddha occupied in teaching the five monks in the Deer Park and the Mahâvagga gives us the text of the sermon with which he opened his instruction. It is entitled Turning the Wheel of Righteousness, and is also known as The Sermon at Benares. It is a very early statement of the main doctrines of primitive Buddhism and I see no reason to doubt that it contains the ideas and phrases of the Buddha. The gist of the sermon is extremely

simple. He first says that those who wish to lead a religious life should avoid the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-torture and follow a middle way. Then he enunciates what he calls the four truths about evil or suffering and the way to make an end of it. He opens very practically, and it may be noticed that abstruse as are many of his discourses they generally go straight to the heart of some contemporary interest. Here he says that self-indulgence is low and self-mortification crazy: that both are profitless and neither is the religious life. That consists in walking in the middle path, or noble eightfold path defined in a celebrated formula as right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right rapture. He then enunciates the four truths. The first declares that all clinging to existence involves suffering. I shall have occasion to examine later the pessimism which is often said to characterize Buddhism and Indian thought generally. Here let it suffice to say that the first truth must be taken in conjunction with the others. The teaching of the Buddha is a teaching not so much of pessimism as of emancipation: but emancipation implies the existence of evil from which men must be freed: a happy world would not need it. Buddhism recognizes the evil of the world but it is not on that account a religion of despair: the essence of it is that it provides a remedy and an escape.

The second and third truths must be taken together and in connection with the formula known as the chain of causation (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Everything has a cause and produces an effect. If this is, that is: if this is not, then that is not. This simple principle of uniform causation is applied to the whole universe, gods and men, heaven, earth and hell. Indian thought has always loved wide applications of fundamental principles and here a law of the universe is propounded in a form both simple and abstract. Everything exists in virtue of a cause and does not exist if that cause is absent. Suffering has a cause and if that cause can be detected and eliminated, suffering itself will be eliminated. This cause of evil is *Tanhā*, the thirst or craving for existence, pleasure and success. And the cure is to remove it. It may seem to the European that this is a proposal to cure the evils of life by removing life itself but when in the fourth truth we come to the course to be followed by the seeker after salvation—the eightfold path—we find it neither extravagant nor morbid. We may imagine that an Indian of that time asking different schools of thinkers for the way to salvation would have been told by Brahmins (if indeed they had been willing to impart knowledge to any but an accredited pupil) that he who performs a certain ceremony goes to the abode of the gods: other teachers would have insisted on a course of fasting and self-torture: others again like *Sāṅjaya* and *Makkhali* would have given argumentative and unpractical answers. The Buddha's answer is simple and practical: seven-eighths of it would be accepted in every civilized country as a description of the good life. It is not merely external, for it insists on right thought and right aspiration: the motive and temper are as important as the act. It does not neglect will-power and activity, for right action, right livelihood and right effort are necessary—a point to be remembered when Buddhism is called a dreamy unpractical religion. But no doubt the last stage of the path, right rapture or right meditation, is meant to be its crown and fulfilment. It takes the place of prayer and communion with the deity and the Buddha promises the beatific vision in this life to those who persevere. The negative features of the Path are also important. It contains no mention of ceremonial, austerities, gods, many or one, nor of the Buddha himself. He is the discoverer and teacher of the truth; beyond that his personality plays no part.

But we are here treating of his life rather than of his doctrine and must now return to the events which are said to have followed the first sermon.

The first converts had, even before embracing the Buddha's teaching, been followers of a religious life but the next batch of recruits came from the wealthy mercantile families of Benares. The first was a youth named *Yasa* who joined the order, while his father, mother and former wife became lay believers. Then came first four and subsequently fifty friends of *Yasa* and joined the order. "At that time" says the *Mahāvagga*. "there were sixty-one Arhats in the world," so that at first arhatship seems to have followed immediately on ordination. Arhat, it may be mentioned, is the commonest word in early Buddhist literature (more common than any phrase about nirvana) for describing sanctity and spiritual perfection. The arhat is one who has

broken the fetters of the senses and passions, for whom there will be no new birth or death, and who lives in this world like the Buddha, detached but happy and beneficent

The Buddha then addressed his followers and said--"Monks, I am delivered from all fetters, human and divine, and so are you. Go now and wander for the gain of many, for the welfare of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain and for the welfare of gods and men. Let not two of you go the same way. Preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle and glorious in the end, in the spirit and in the letter; proclaim a consummate, perfect and pure life of holiness." The monks then went forth and returned bringing candidates to be formally ordained by the Buddha. But seeing that these journeys caused fatigue and trouble, he authorized the ordained monks to confer ordination without reference to himself. He then returned to Uruvelâ, where he had dwelt before attaining Buddhahood, and converted a thousand Jaṭilas, that is to say Brahmans living the life of hermits, which involved the abandonment of household life but not of sacrifices. The admission of these hermits to the order is probably historical and explains the presence among the Buddha's disciples of a tendency towards self-mortification of which he himself did not wholly approve. The Mahāvagga contains a series of short legends about these occurrences, one of them in two versions. The narratives are miraculous but have an ancient tone and probably represent the type of popular story current about the Buddha shortly after or even during his life. One of them is a not uncommon subject in Buddhist art. It relates how the chamber in which a Brahman called Kassapa kept his sacred fire was haunted by a fire-breathing magical serpent. The Buddha however spent the night in this chamber and after a contest in which both emitted flames succeeded in conquering the beast. After converting the Jaṭilas he preached to them the celebrated Fire Sermon, said to have been delivered on the eminence now called Brahma Yoen near Gaya and possibly inspired by the spectacle of grass fires which at some seasons may be seen creeping over every hill-side in an Indian night, "Everything, Monks, is burning and how is it burning? The eye is burning: what the eye sees is burning: thoughts based on the eye are burning: the contact of the eye (with visible things) is burning and the sensation produced by that contact, whether pleasant, painful or indifferent is also burning. With what fire is it burning? It is burning with the fire of lust, the fire of anger, with the fire of ignorance; it is burning with the sorrows of birth, decay, death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair."

The Buddha now went on with his converts to Rājagaha. He stopped in a bamboo grove outside the town and here the king, Bimbisāra, waited on him and with every sign of respect asked him to take food in his palace. It was on this occasion that we first hear of him accepting an invitation to dinner, which he did frequently during the rest of his career. After the repast the king presented a pleasure garden just outside the town "to the fraternity of monks with the Buddha at their head." At that time another celebrated teacher named Sāñjaya was stopping at Rājagaha with a train of two hundred and fifty disciples. Two of them, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, joined the Buddha's order and took with them the whole body of their companions.

The Mahāvagga proceeds to relate that many of the young nobility joined the order and that the people began to murmur saying "The Monk Gotama causes fathers to beget no sons and families to become extinct." And again "The Great Monk has come to Giribbaja of the Magadha people, leading with him all the followers of Sāñjaya. Whom will he lead off next?" When this was told to the Buddha he replied that the excitement would only last seven days and bade his followers answer with the following verse "It is by the true doctrine that the great heroes, the Buddhas, lead men. Who will murmur at the wise who lead men by the power of truth?" It is possible, as Oldenburg suggests, that we have here two popular couplets which were really bandied between the friends and enemies of the Buddha.

3

It now becomes difficult to give dates but the Mahāvagga relates that the Buddha stopped some time at Rājagaha and then revisited his native town, Kapilavattu. That he should have done so is natural enough but there is little trace of sentiment in the narrative of the Vinaya. Its object is

to state the occasion on which the Buddha laid down the rules of the order. Irrelevant incidents are ignored and those which are noticed are regarded simply as the circumstances which led to the formulation of certain regulations. "The Lord dwelt in the Sakka country near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Grove. And in the forenoon having put on his robes and taken his alms bowl he went to the home of the Sakka Suddhodana and sat down on a seat prepared for him. Then the princess who was the mother of Râhula said to him 'This is your father, Râhula, go and ask him for your inheritance.' Then young Râhula went to the place where the Lord was, and standing before him said 'Your shadow, Monk, is a place of bliss.' Then the Lord rose from his seat and went away but Râhula followed him saying 'Give me my inheritance, Monk.' Then the Lord said to Sâriputta (who had already become his chief disciple) 'Well, Sâriputta, confer the preliminary ordination on young Râhula.' Sâriputta asked how he should do so and the Buddha explained the forms.

"Then the Sakka Suddhodana went to the place where the Lord was and after respectfully saluting him asked for a boon. 'Lord, when the Blessed One gave up the world, it was great pain to me and so it was when Nanda did the same. Great too was my pain when Râhula did it. The love for a son, Lord, cuts into the skin, the flesh, the bones, and reaches the marrow. Let not the preliminary ordination be conferred on a son without his parents' permission.' The Buddha assented. Three or four years later Suddhodana died."

From Kapilavatthu the Buddha is said to have gone to Sâvatthî, the capital of Kosala where Pasenadi was king, but now we lose the chronological thread and do not find it again until the last years of his life. Few of the numerous incidents recorded in the Pitakas can be dated. The narrators resemble those Indian artists who when carving a story in relief place all the principal figures in one panel without attempting to mark the sequence of the incidents which are represented simultaneously. For the connection of events with the Buddha's teaching the compilers of the Pitakas had an eye; for their connection with his life none at all. And though this attitude is disquieting to the historic sense it is not unjustifiable. The object and the achievement of the Buddha was to preach a certain doctrine and to found an order. All the rest—years and countries, pains and pleasures—was of no importance. And it would appear that we have not lost much: we should have a greater sense of security if we had an orderly account of his wanderings and his relations with the kings of his time, but after he had once entered on his ministry the events which broke the peaceful tenour of his long life were few and we probably know most of them though we cannot date them. For about forty-five years he moved about Kosala, Magadha and Anga visiting the two capitals Sâvatthî and Râjagaha and going as far west as the country of the Kurus. He took little part in politics or worldly life, though a hazy but not improbable story represents him as pacifying the Sâkyas and Koliyas, who were on the point of fighting about the water of the Rohini which irrigated the lands of both clans. He uniformly enjoyed the respect and attention of kings and the wealthy classes. Doubtless he was not popular with the Brahmans or with those good people who disliked seeing fine young men made into monks. But it does not appear that his teaching provoked any serious tumults or that he was troubled by anything but schism within the order. We have, if not a history, at least a picture of a life which though peaceful was active and benevolent but aloof, majestic and authoritative.

We are told that at first his disciples wandered about at all seasons but it was not long before he bade them observe the already established routine for itinerant monks of travelling on foot during the greater part of the year but of resting for three months during the rainy season known as Vassa and beginning some time in June. When moving about he appears to have walked from five to ten miles a day, regulating his movements so as to reach inhabited places in time to collect food for the midday meal. The afternoon he devoted to meditation and in the evening gave instruction. He usually halted in woods or gardens on the outskirts of villages and cities, and often on the bank of a river or tank, for shade and water would be the first requisites for a wandering monk. On these journeys he was accompanied by a considerable following of disciples: five hundred or twelve hundred and fifty are often mentioned and though the numbers may be exaggerated there is no reason to doubt that the band was large. The suttas generally

commence with a picture of the surroundings in which the discourse recorded was delivered. The Buddha is walking along the high road from Rājagaha to Nālanda with a great company of disciples. Or he is journeying through Kosala and halting in a mango-grove on the banks of the Aciravatī river. Or he is stopping in a wood outside a Brahman village and the people go out to him. The principal Brahmans, taking their siesta on the upper terraces of their houses, see the crowd and ask their doorkeepers what it means. On hearing the cause they debate whether they or the Buddha should pay the first call and ultimately visit him. Or he is halting on the shore of the Gaggarā Lake at Campā in Western Bengal, sitting under the fragrant white flowers of a campaka tree. Or he visits the hills overlooking Rājagaha haunted by peacocks and by wandering monks. Often he stops in buildings described as halls, which were sometimes merely rest houses for travellers. But it became more and more the custom for the devout to erect such buildings for his special use and even in his lifetime they assumed the proportions of monasteries. The people of Vesālī built one in a wood to the north of their city known as the Gabled Hall. It was a storied house having on the ground floor a large room surrounded by pillars and above it the private apartments of the Buddha. Such private rooms (especially those which he occupied at Sāvattthī), were called Gandhakūṭī or the perfumed chamber. At Kapilavatthu the Sākyas erected a new building known as Santhagāra. The Buddha was asked to inaugurate it and did so by a discourse lasting late into the night which he delivered sitting with his back against a pillar. At last he said his back was tired and lay down, leaving Ānanda to continue the edification of the congregation who were apparently less exhausted than the preacher.

But perhaps the residence most frequently mentioned is that in the garden called Jetavana at Sāvattthī. Anāthapiṇḍika, a rich merchant of that town, was converted by the Buddha when staying at Rājagaha and invited him to spend the next rainy season at Sāvattthī. On returning to his native town to look for a suitable place, he decided that the garden of the Prince Jeta best satisfied his requirements. He obtained it only after much negotiation for a sum sufficient to cover the whole ground with coins. When all except a small space close to the gateway had been thus covered Jeta asked to be allowed to share in the gift and on receiving permission erected on the vacant spot a gateway with a room over it. "And Anāthapiṇḍika the householder built dwelling rooms and retiring rooms and storerooms and halls with fireplaces, and outside storehouses and closets and cloisters and halls attached to the bath rooms and ponds and roofed open sheds."

Buddhaghosa has given an account of the way in which the Buddha was wont to spend his days when stopping in some such resting-place, and his description is confirmed by the numerous details given in the Pīṭakas. He rose before dawn and would often retire and meditate until it was time to set out on the round for alms but not unfrequently he is represented as thinking that it was too early to start and that he might first visit some monk of the neighbourhood. Then he went round the town or village with his disciples, carrying his almsbowl and accepting everything put into it. Sometimes he talked to his disciples while walking. Frequently, instead of begging for alms, he accepted an invitation to dine with some pious person who asked the whole band of disciples and made strenuous culinary efforts. Such invitations were given at the conclusion of a visit paid to the Buddha on the previous day and were accepted by him with silence which signified consent. On the morning of the next day the host announced in person or through a messenger that the meal was ready and the Buddha taking his mantle and bowl went to the house. The host waited on the guests with his own hands, putting the food which he had prepared into their bowls. After the repast the Buddha delivered a discourse or catechized the company. He did the same with his own disciples when he collected food himself and returned home to eat it. He took but one meal a day, between eleven and twelve, and did not refuse meat when given to him, provided that he did not know the animals had been slaughtered expressly for his food. When he had given instruction after the meal he usually retired to his chamber or to a quiet spot under trees for repose and meditation. On one occasion he took his son Rāhula with him into a wood at this hour to impart some of the deepest truths to him, but as a rule he gave no further instruction until the late afternoon.

The Pitakas represent all believers as treating the Buddha with the greatest respect but the salutations and titles which they employ hardly exceed those ordinarily used in speaking to eminent persons. Kings were at this time addressed as Deva, whereas the Buddha's usual title is Bhagavâ or Bhante, Lord. A religious solemnity and deliberation prevails in the interviews which he grants but no extravagance of adoration is recorded. Visitors salute him by bowing with joined hands, sit respectfully on one side while he instructs them and in departing are careful to leave him on their right hand. He accepts such gifts as food, clothes, gardens and houses but rejects all ceremonial honours. Thus Prince Bodhi when receiving him carpeted his mansion with white cloths but the Buddha would not walk on them and remained standing at the entrance till they were taken up.

The introduction to the Ariyapariyesana-Sutta gives a fairly complete picture of a day in his life at Sâvatthî. It relates how in the morning he took his bowl and mantle and went to the town to collect food. While he was away, some monks told his personal attendant Ānanda that they wished to hear a discourse from him, as it was long since they had had the privilege. Ānanda suggested that they had better go to the hermitage of the Brahman Rammaka near the town. The Buddha returned, ate his meal and then said "Come, Ānanda, let us go to the terrace of Migâra's mother and stay there till evening." They went there and spent the day in meditation. Towards evening the Buddha rose and said "Let us go to the old bath to refresh our limbs." After they had bathed, Ānanda suggested that they should go to Rammaka's hermitage: the Buddha assented by his silence and they went together. Within the hermitage were many monks engaged in instructive conversation, so the Buddha waited at the door till there was a pause in the talk. Then he coughed and knocked. The monks opened the door, and offered him a seat. After a short conversation, he recounted to them how he had striven for and obtained Buddhahood.

These congregations were often prolonged late into the night. We hear for instance how he sat on the terrace belonging to Migâra's mother in the midst of an assembly of monks waiting for his words, still and silent in the light of the full moon; how a monk would rise, adjusting his robe so as to leave one shoulder bare, bow with his hands joined and raised to his forehead and ask permission to put a question and the Lord would reply, Be seated, monk, ask what you will. But sometimes in these nightly congregations the silence was unbroken. When King Ajâtasattu went to visit him in the mango grove of Jîvaka he was seized with sudden fear at the unearthly stillness of the place and suspected an ambush. "Fear not, O King," said Jîvaka, "I am playing you no tricks. Go straight on. There in the pavilion hall the lamps are burning ... and there is the Blessed One sitting against the middle pillar, facing the east with the brethren round him." And when the king beheld the assembly seated in perfect silence, calm as a clear lake, he exclaimed "Would that my son might have such calm as this assembly now has."

The major part of the Buddha's activity was concerned with the instruction of his disciples and the organization of the Sangha or order. Though he was ready to hear and teach all, the portrait presented to us is not that of a popular preacher who collects and frequents crowds but rather that of a master, occupied with the instruction of his pupils, a large band indeed but well prepared and able to appreciate and learn by heart teaching which, though freely offered to the whole world, was somewhat hard to untrained ears. In one passage an enquirer asks him why he shows more zeal in teaching some than others. The answer is, if a landowner had three fields, one excellent, one middling and one of poor soil, would he not first sow the good field, then the middling field, and last of all the bad field, thinking to himself; it will just produce fodder for the cattle? So the Buddha preaches first to his own monks, then to lay-believers, and then, like the landowner who sows the bad field last, to Brahmins, ascetics and wandering monks of other sects, thinking if they only understand one word, it will do them good for a long while. It was to such congregations of disciples or to enquirers belonging to other religious orders that he addressed his most important discourses, iterating in grave numbered periods the truths concerning the reality of sorrow and the equal reality of salvation, as he sat under a clump of bamboos or in the shade of a banyan, in sight perhaps of a tank where the lotuses red, white and blue, submerged or rising from the water, typified the various classes of mankind.

He did not start by laying down any constitution for his order. Its rules were formed entirely by case law. Each incident and difficulty was referred to him as it arose and his decision was accepted as the law on that point. During his last illness he showed a noble anxiety not to hamper his followers by the prestige of his name but to leave behind him a body of free men, able to be a light and a help to themselves. But a curious passage represents an old monk as saying immediately after his death “Weep not, brethren; we are well rid of the Great Monk. We used to be annoyed by being told, ‘This beseems you and this does not beseem you. But now we shall be able to do what we like and not have to do what we don’t like.’” Clearly the laxer disciples felt the Master’s hand to be somewhat heavy and we might have guessed as much. For though Gotama had a breadth of view rare in that or in any age, though he refused to multiply observances or to dogmatize, every sutta indicates that he was a man of exceptional authority and decision; what he has laid down he has laid down; there is no compulsion or punishment, no vow of obedience or *sacrificium intellectus*; but it is equally clear that there is no place in the order for those who in great or small think differently from the master.

In shepherding his flock he had the assistance of his senior disciples. Of these the most important were Sâriputta and Moggallâna, both of them Brahmans who left their original teacher Sâñjaya to join him at the outset of his ministry. Sâriputta enjoyed his confidence so fully that he acted as his representative and gave authoritative expositions of doctrine. The Buddha even compared him to the eldest son of an Emperor who assists his father in the government. But both he and Moggallâna died before their master and thus did not labour independently. Another important disciple Upâli survived him and probably contributed materially to the codification of the Vinaya. Anuruddha and Ânanda, both of them Sâkyas, are also frequently mentioned, especially the latter who became his personal attendant and figures in the account of his illness and death as the beloved disciple to whom his last instructions were committed. These two together with four other young Sâkya nobles and Upâli joined the order twenty-five years before Gotama’s death and perhaps formed an inner circle of trusted relatives, though we have no reason to think there was any friction between them and Brahmans like Sâriputta. Upâli is said to have been barber of the Sâkyas. It is not easy to say what his social status may have been, but it probably did not preclude intimacy.

The Buddha was frequently occupied with maintaining peace and order among his disciples. Though the profession of a monk excluded worldly advancement, it was held in great esteem and was hence adopted by ambitious and quarrelsome men who had no true vocation. The troubles which arose in the Sangha are often ascribed in the Vinaya to the Chabbaggiyas, six brethren who became celebrated in tradition as spirits of mischief and who are evidently made the peg on which these old monkish anecdotes are hung. As a rule the intervention of the Buddha was sufficient to restore peace, but one passage indicates resistance to his authority. The brethren quarrelled so often that the people said it was a public scandal. The Buddha endeavoured to calm the disputants, but one of them replied, “Lord, let the Blessed One quietly enjoy the bliss which he has obtained in this life. The responsibility for these quarrels will rest with us alone.” This seems a clear hint that the Blessed One had better mind his own business. Renewed injunctions and parables met with no better result. “And the Blessed One thought” says the narrative “truly these fools are infatuated,” and he rose from his seat and went away.”

Other troubles are mentioned but by far the most serious was the schism of Devadatta, represented as occurring in the old age of Gotama when he was about seventy-two. The story as told in the Cullavagga is embellished with supernatural incidents and seems not to observe the natural sequence of events but perhaps three features are historical: namely that Devadatta wished to supersede the Buddha as head of the order, that he was the friend of Ajâtasattu, Crown Prince and afterwards King of Magadha, and that he advocated a stricter rule of life than the Buddha chose to enforce. This combination of piety and ambition is perhaps not unnatural. He was a cousin of the Buddha and entered the order at the same time as Ânanda and other young Sâkya nobles. Sprung from that quarrelsome breed he possessed in a distorted form some of Gotama’s own ability. He is represented as publicly urging the Master to retire and dwell at ease but met with an absolute refusal. Sâriputta was directed to “proclaim” him in

Râjagaha, the proclamation being to the effect that his nature had changed and that all his words and deeds were disowned by the order. Then Devadatta incited the Crown Prince to murder his father, Bimbisâra. The plot was prevented by the ministers but the king told Ajâtasattu that if he wanted the kingdom he could have it and abdicated. But his unnatural son put him to death all the same by starving him slowly in confinement. With the assistance of Ajâtasattu, Devadatta then tried to compass the death of the Buddha. First he hired assassins, but they were converted as soon as they approached the sacred presence. Then he rolled down a rock from the Vulture's peak with the intention of crushing the Buddha, but the mountain itself interfered to stop the sacrilege and only a splinter scratched the Lord's foot. Then he arranged for a mad elephant to be let loose in the road at the time of collecting alms, but the Buddha calmed the furious beast. It is perhaps by some error of arrangement that after committing such unpardonable crimes Devadatta is represented as still a member of the order and endeavouring to provoke a schism by asking for stricter rules. The attempt failed and according to later legends he died on the spot, but the Vinaya merely says that hot blood gushed from his mouth.

That there are historical elements in this story is shown by the narrative of Fa Hsien, the Chinese pilgrim who travelled in India about 400 A.D. He tells us that the followers of Devadatta still existed in Kosala and revered the three previous Buddhas but refused to recognize Gotama. This is interesting, for it seems to show that it was possible to accept Gotama's doctrine, or the greater part of it, as something independent of his personality and an inheritance from earlier teachers.

The Udâna and Jâtaka relate another plot without specifying the year. Some heretics induced a nun called Sundarî to pretend she was the Buddha's concubine and hired assassins to murder her. They then accused the Bhikkhus of killing her to conceal their master's sin, but the real assassins got drunk with the money they had received and revealed the conspiracy in their cups.

But these are isolated cases. As a whole the Buddha's long career was marked by a peace and friendliness which are surprising if we consider what innovations his teaching contained. Though in contending that priestly ceremonies were useless he refrained from neither direct condemnation nor satire, yet he is not represented as actively attacking them and we may doubt if he forbade his lay disciples to take part in rites and sacrifices as a modern missionary might do. We find him sitting by the sacred fire of a Brahman and discoursing, but not denouncing the worship carried on in the place. When he converted Siha, the general of the Licchavis, who had been a Jain, he bade him continue to give food and gifts as before to the Jain monks who frequented his house—an instance of toleration in a proselytizing teacher which is perhaps without parallel. Similarly in the Sîgâlovâda-sutta it is laid down that a good man ministers to monks and to Brahmans. If it is true that Ajâtasattu countenanced Devadatta's attempts to murder him, he ignored such disagreeable details with a sublime indifference, for he continued to frequent Râjagaha, received the king, and preached to him one of his finest sermons without alluding to the past. He stands before us in the suttas as a man of amazing power of will, inaccessible to fear, promises and, one may add, to argument but yet in comparison with other religious leaders singularly gentle in taking the offensive against error. Often he simply ignored it as irrelevant: "Never mind" he said on his deathbed to his last convert "Never mind, whether other teachers are right or wrong. Listen to me, I will teach you the truth." And when he is controversial his method is often to retain old words in honourable use with new meanings. The Brahmans are not denounced like the Pharisees in the New Testament but the real Brahman is a man of uprightness and wisdom: the real sacrifice is to abstain from sin and follow the Truth.

Women played a considerable part in the entourage of Gotama. They were not secluded in India at that time and he admitted that they were capable of attaining saintship. The work of ministering to the order, of supplying it with food and raiment, naturally fell largely to pious matrons, and their attentive forethought delighted to provide for the monks those comforts which might be accepted but not asked for. Prominent among such donors was Visâkhâ, who married the son of a wealthy merchant at Sâvatthî and converted her husband's family from Jainism to the true doctrine. The Vinaya recounts how after entertaining the Buddha and his disciples she asked eight boons which proved to be the privileges of supplying various classes

of monks with food, clothing and medicine and of providing the nuns with bathing dresses, for, said she, it shocked her sense of propriety to see them bathing naked. But the anecdotes respecting the Buddha and women, whether his wife or others, are not touched with sentiment, not even so much as is found in the conversation between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyî in the Upanishad. To women as a class he gave their due and perhaps in his own opinion more than their due, but if he felt any interest in them as individuals, the sacred texts have obliterated the record. In the last year of his life he dined with the courtesan Ambapâlî and the incident has attracted attention on account of its supposed analogy to the narrative about Christ and “the woman which was a sinner.” But the resemblance is small. There is no sign that the Buddha, then eighty years of age, felt any personal interest in Ambapâlî. Whatever her morals may have been, she was a benefactress of the order and he simply gave her the same opportunity as others of receiving instruction. When the Licchavi princes tried to induce him to dine with them instead of with her, he refused to break his promise. The invitations of princes had no attraction for him, and he was a prince himself. A fragment of conversation introduced irrelevantly into his deathbed discourses is significant: “How, Lord, are we to conduct ourselves with regard to womankind? Don’t see them, Ânanda. But if we see them, what are we to do? Abstain from speech. But if they should speak to us what are we to do? Keep wide awake.”

This spirit is even more evident in the account of the admission of Nuns to the order. When the Buddha was visiting his native town his aunt and foster mother, Mahâprajâpatî, thrice begged him to grant this privilege to women but was thrice refused and went away in tears. Then she followed him to Vesâlî and stood in the entrance of the Kûṭagâra Hall “with swollen feet and covered with dust, and sorrowful.” Ânanda, who had a tender heart, interviewed her and, going in to the Buddha, submitted her request but received a triple refusal. But he was not to be denied and urged that the Buddha admitted women to be capable of attaining saintship and that it was unjust to refuse the blessings of religion to one who had suckled him. At last Gotama yielded—perhaps the only instance in which he is represented as convinced by argument—but he added “If, Ânanda, women had not received permission to enter the Order, the pure religion would have lasted long, the good law would have stood fast a thousand years. But since they had received that permission, it will now stand fast for only five hundred years.”

He maintained and approved the same hard detached attitude in other domestic relations. His son Râhula received special instruction but is not represented as enjoying his confidence like Ânanda. A remarkable narrative relates how, when the monk Sangâmajî was sitting beneath a tree absorbed in meditation, his former wife (whom he had left on abandoning the world) laid his child before him and said “Here, monk, is your little son, nourish me and nourish him.” But Sangâmajî took no notice and the woman went away. The Buddha who observed what happened said “He feels no pleasure when she comes, no sorrow when she goes: him I call a true Brahman released from passion.” This narrative is repulsive to European sentiment, particularly as the chronicler cannot spare the easy charity of a miracle to provide for the wife and child, but in taking it as an index of the character of Gotama, we must bear in mind such sayings of Christ as “If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

4

Political changes, in which however he took no part, occurred in the last years of the Buddha’s life. In Magadha Ajâtasattu had come to the throne. If, as the Vinaya represents, he at first supported the schism of Devadatta, he subsequently became a patron of the Buddha. He was an ambitious prince and fortified Pâṭaligâma (afterwards Pâṭaliputra) against the Vajjian confederation, which he destroyed a few years after the Buddha’s death. This confederation was an alliance of small oligarchies like the Licchavis and Videhans. It would appear that this form of constitution was on the wane in northern India and that the monarchical states were annexing the decaying commonwealths. In Kosala, Viḍûḍabha conquered Kapilavatthu a year or two before the Buddha’s death, and is said to have perpetrated a great massacre of the Sâkyas

clan. Possibly in consequence of these events the Buddha avoided Kosala and the former Sākya territory. At any rate the record of his last days opens at Rājagaha, the capital of Magadha.

This record is contained in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, the longest of the suttas and evidently a compilation. The style is provokingly uneven. It often promises to give a simple and natural narrative but such passages are interrupted by more recent and less relevant matter. No general estimate of its historical value can be given but each incident must be apprized separately. Nearly all the events and discourses recorded in it are found elsewhere in the canon in the same words and it contains explanatory matter of a suspiciously apologetic nature. Also the supernatural element is freely introduced. But together with all this it contains plain pathetic pictures of an old man's fatigue and sufferings which would not have been inserted by a later hand, had they not been found ready in tradition. And though events and sermonettes are strung together in a way which is not artistic, there is nothing improbable in the idea that the Buddha when he felt his end approaching should have admonished his disciples about all that he thought most important.

The story opens at Rājagaha about six months before the Buddha's death. The King sends his minister to ask whether he will be successful in attacking the Vajjians. The Buddha replies that as long as they act in concord, behave honourably, and respect the Faith, so long may they be expected not to decline but prosper. The compiler may perhaps have felt this narrative to be an appropriate parallel to the Buddha's advice to his disciples to live in peace and order. He summoned and addressed the brethren living in Rājagaha and visited various spots in the neighbourhood. In these last utterances one phrase occurs with special frequency, "Great is the fruit, great the advantage of meditation accompanied by upright conduct: great is the advantage of intelligence accompanied by meditation. The mind which has such intelligence is freed from intoxications, from the desires of the senses, from love of life, from delusion and from ignorance."

He then set forth accompanied by Ānanda and several disciples. Judging from the route adopted his intention was to go ultimately to Sāvathî. This was one of the towns where he resided from time to time, but we cannot tell what may have been his special motives for visiting it on the present occasion, for if the King of Kosala had recently massacred the Sākyas his presence there would have been strange. The road was not direct but ran up northwards and then followed the base of the mountains, thus enabling travellers to cross rivers near their sources where they were still easy to ford. The stopping-places from Rājagaha onwards were Nālanda, Pāṭaliputra, Vesālî, Bhandagāma, Pāvā, Kusinārā, Kapilavatthu, Setavya, Sāvathî. On his last journey the Buddha is represented as following this route but he died at the seventh stopping-place, Kusinārā. When at Pāṭaligāma, he prophesied that it would become a great emporium. He was honourably entertained by the officers of the King who decided that the gate and ferry by which he left should be called Gotama's gate and Gotama's ferry. The gate received the name, but when he came to the Ganges he vanished miraculously and appeared standing on the further bank. He then went on to Vesālî, passing with indifference and immunity from the dominions of the King of Magadha into those of his enemies, and halted in the grove of the courtesan Ambapālî. She came to salute him and he accepted her invitation to dine with her on the morrow, in spite of the protests of the Licchavi princes.

The rainy season was now commencing and the Buddha remained near Vesālî in the village of Beluva, where he fell seriously ill. One day after his recovery he was sitting in the shade with Ānanda, who said that during the illness his comfort had been the thought that the Buddha would not pass away without leaving final instructions to the Order. The reply was a remarkable address which is surely, at least, in parts the Buddha's own words.

"What does the order expect of me, Ānanda? I have preached the truth without any distinction of esoteric or exoteric, for in respect of the truth, there is no clenched hand in the teaching of the Tathāgata. If there is anyone who thinks 'it is I who will lead the brotherhood' or 'the order is dependent on me,' it is he who should give instructions. But the Tathāgata does not think that he should lead the order or that the order is dependent on him. Why then should he leave instructions? I am an old man now, and full of years, my pilgrimage is finished, I have

reached my sum of days, I am turning eighty years; and just as a worn-out cart can only be made to move along with much additional care, so can the body of the Tathagâta be kept going only with much additional care. It is only when the Tathagâta, ceasing to attend to any outward thing becomes plunged in meditation, it is only then that the body of the Tathagâta is at ease. Therefore, Ānanda, be a lamp and a refuge to yourselves. Seek no other refuge. Let the Truth be your lamp and refuge; seek no refuge elsewhere.

“And they, Ānanda, who now or when I am dead shall be a lamp and a refuge to themselves, seeking no other refuge but taking the Truth as their lamp and refuge, these shall be my foremost disciples—these who are anxious to learn.”

This discourse is succeeded by a less convincing episode, in which the Buddha tells Ānanda that he can prolong his life to the end of a world-period if he desires it. But though the hint was thrice repeated, the heedless disciple did not ask the Master to remain in the world. When he had gone, Mâra, the Evil one, appeared and urged on the Buddha that it was time for him to pass away. He replied that he would die in three months but not before he had completely established the true religion. Thus he deliberately rejected his allotted span of life and an earthquake occurred. He explained the cause of it to Ānanda, who saw his mistake too late. “Enough, Ānanda, the time for making such a request is past.”

The narrative becomes more human when it relates how one afternoon he looked at the town and said, “This will be the last time that the Tathâgata will behold Vesâlî. Come, Ānanda, let us go to Bhandagâma.” After three halts he arrived at Pāvâ and stopped in the mango grove of Cunda, a smith, who invited him to dinner and served sweet rice, cakes, and a dish which has been variously interpreted as dried boar’s flesh or a kind of truffle. The Buddha asked to be served with this dish and bade him give the sweet rice and cakes to the brethren. After eating some of it he ordered the rest to be buried, saying that no one in heaven or earth except a Buddha could digest it, a strange remark to chronicle since it was this meal which killed him. But before he died he sent word to Cunda that he had no need to feel remorse and that the two most meritorious offerings in the world are the first meal given to a Buddha after he has obtained enlightenment and the last one given him before his death. On leaving Cunda’s house he was attacked by dysentery and violent pains but bore them patiently and started for Kusinârâ with his disciples. In going thither he crossed the river Kakutthâ, and some verses inserted into the text, which sound like a very old ballad, relate how he bathed in it and then, weary and worn out, lay down on his cloak. A curious incident occurs here. A young Mallian, named Pukkuisa, after some conversation with the Buddha, presents him with a robe of cloth of gold, but when it is put on it seems to lose its splendour, so exceedingly clear and bright is his skin. Gotama explains that there are two occasions when the skin of a Buddha glows like this—the night of his enlightenment and the night before his death. The transfiguration of Christ suggests itself as a parallel and is also associated with an allusion to his coming death. Most people have seen a face so light up under the influence of emotion that this popular metaphor seemed to express physical truth and it is perhaps not excessive to suppose that in men of exceptional gifts this illumination may have been so bright as to leave traces in tradition.

Then they went on to a grove at Kusinârâ, and he lay down on a couch spread between two Sâla trees. These trees were in full bloom, though it was not the season for their flowering; heavenly strains and odours filled the air and spirits unseen crowded round the bed. But Ānanda, we are told, went into the Vihâra, which was apparently also in the grove, and stood leaning against the lintel weeping at the thought that he was to lose so kind a master. The Buddha sent for him and said, “Do not weep. Have I not told you before that it is the very nature of things most near and dear to us that we must part from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them? All that is born, brought into being and put together carries within itself the necessity of dissolution. How then is it possible that such a being should not be dissolved? No such condition is possible. For a long time, Ānanda, you have been very near me by words of love, kind and good, that never varies and is beyond all measure. You have done well, Ānanda. Be earnest in effort and you too shall soon be free from the great evils—from sensuality, from individuality, from delusion and from ignorance.”

The Indians have a strong feeling that persons of distinction should die in a suitable place, and now comes a passage in which Ānanda begs the Buddha not to die “in this little wattle and daub town in the midst of the jungle” but rather in some great city. The Buddha told him that Kusinârâ had once been the capital of King Mahâsudassana and a scene of great splendour in former ages. This narrative is repeated in an amplified form in the Sutta and Jâtaka called Mahâsudassana, in which the Buddha is said to have been that king in a previous birth.

Kusinârâ was at that time one of the capitals of the Mallas, who were an aristocratic republic like the Sâkyas and Vajjians. At the Buddha’s command Ānanda went to the Council hall and summoned the people. “Give no occasion to reproach yourself hereafter saying, The Tathâgata died in our own village and we neglected to visit him in his last hours.” So the Mallas came and Ānanda presented them by families to the dying Buddha as he lay between the flowering trees, saying “Lord, a Malla of such and such a name with his children, his wives, his retinue and his friends humbly bows down at the feet of the Blessed One.”

A monk called Subhadda, who was not a believer, also came and Ānanda tried to turn him away but the Buddha overhearing said “Do not keep out Subhadda. Whatever he may ask of me he will ask from a desire for knowledge and not to annoy me and he will quickly understand my replies.” He was the last disciple whom the Buddha converted, and he straightway became an Arhat.

Now comes the last watch of the night. “It may be, Ānanda,” said the Buddha, “that some of you may think, the word of the Master is ended. We have no more a teacher. But you should not think thus. The truths and the rules which I have declared and laid down for you all, let them be the teacher for you after I am gone.

“When I am gone address not one another as hitherto, saying ‘Friend.’ An elder brother may address a younger brother by his name or family-name or as friend, but a younger brother should say to an elder, Sir, or Lord.

“When I am gone let the order, if it should so wish, abolish all the lesser and minor precepts.”

Thus in his last address the dying Buddha disclaims, as he had disclaimed before in talking to Ānanda, all idea of dictating to the order: his memory is not to become a paralyzing tradition. What he had to teach, he has taught freely, holding back nothing in “a clenched fist.” The truths are indeed essential and immutable. But they must become a living part of the believer, until he is no longer a follower but a light unto himself. The rest does not matter: the order can change all the minor rules if expedient. But in everyday life discipline and forms must be observed: hitherto all have been equal compared with the teacher, but now the young must show more respect for the older. And in the same spirit of solicitude for the order he continues:

“When I am gone, the highest penalty should be imposed on Channa.” “What is that, Lord?” “Let him say what he likes, but the brethren should not speak to him or exhort him or admonish him.”

The end approaches. “It may be, that there is some doubt or misgiving in the mind of some as to the Buddha, or the truth, or the path, or the way. Enquire freely. Do not have to reproach yourselves afterwards with the thought, ‘Our teacher was face to face with us and we could not bring ourselves to enquire when we were face to face with him.’” All were silent. A second and third time he put the same question and there was silence still. “It may be, that you put no questions out of awe for the teacher. Let one friend communicate to another.” There was still silence, till Ānanda said “How wonderful, Lord, and how marvellous. In this whole assembly there is no one who has any doubt or misgiving as to the Buddha, the truth, the path and the way.” “Out of the fulness of faith hast thou spoken Ānanda, but the Tathâgata knows for certain that it is so. Even the most backward of all these five hundred brethren has become converted and is no longer liable to be born in a state of suffering and is assured of final salvation.”

“Behold, I exhort you saying, The elements of being are transitory. Strive earnestly. These were the last words of the Tathâgata.” Then he passed through a series of trances (no less than twenty stages are enumerated) and expired.

An earthquake and thunder, as one might have predicted, occurred at the moment of his death but comparatively little stress is laid on these prodigies. Anuruddha seems to have taken

the lead among the brethren and bade Ānanda announce the death to the Mallas. They heard it with cries of grief: “Too soon has the Blessed One passed away. Too soon has the light gone out of the world.”

No less than six days were passed in preparation for the obsequies. On the seventh they decided to carry the body to the south of the city and there burn it. But when they endeavoured to lift it, they found it immovable. Anuruddha explained that spirits who were watching the ceremony wished it to be carried not outside the city but through it. When this was done the corpse moved easily and the heaven rained flowers. The meaning of this legend is that the Mallas considered a corpse would have defiled the city and therefore proposed to carry it outside. By letting it pass through the city they showed that it was not the ordinary relics of impure humanity.

Again, when they tried to light the funeral pile it would not catch fire. Anuruddha explained that this delay also was due to the intervention of spirits who wished that Mahākassapa, the same whom the Buddha had converted at Uruvelā and then on his way to pay his last respects, should arrive before the cremation. When he came attended by five hundred monks the pile caught fire of itself and the body was consumed completely, leaving only the bones. Streams of rain extinguished the flames and the Mallas took the bones to their council hall. There they set round them a hedge of spears and a fence of bows and honoured them with dance and song and offerings of garlands and perfumes.

Whatever may be thought of this story, the veneration of the Buddha’s relics, which is attested by the Piprava vase, is a proof that we have to do with a man rather than a legend. The relics may all be false, but the fact that they were venerated some 250 years after his death shows that the people of India thought of him not as an ancient semi-divine figure like Rama or Krishna but as something human and concrete.

Seven persons or communities sent requests for a portion of the relics, saying that they would erect a stupa over them and hold a feast. They were King Ajātasattu of Magadha, the Licchavis of Vesālī, the Sākyas of Kapilavatthu, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Koṭiyas of Rāmagāma, the Mallas of Pāvā and the Brahman of Veṭhadīpa. All except the last were Kshatriyas and based their claim on the ground that they like the Buddha belonged to the warrior caste. The Mallas at first refused, but a Brahman called Doṇa bade them not quarrel over the remains of him who taught forbearance. So he divided the relics into eight parts, one for Kusinārā and one for each of the other seven claimants. At this juncture the Moriyas of Pippalivana sent in a claim for a share but had to be content with the embers of the pyre since all the bones had been distributed. Then eight stupas were built for the relics in the towns mentioned and one over the embers and one by Doṇa the Brahman over the iron vessel in which the body had been burnt.

5

Thus ended the career of a man who was undoubtedly one of the greatest intellectual and moral forces that the world has yet seen, but it is hard to arrive at any certain opinion as to the details of his character and abilities, for in the later accounts he is deified and in the Pitakas though veneration has not gone so far as this, he is ecclesiasticized and the human side is neglected. The narrative moves like some stately ceremonial in which emotion and incident would be out of place until it reaches the strange deathbed, spread between the flowering trees, and Ānanda introduces with the formality of a court chamberlain the Malla householders who have come to pay their last respects and bow down at the feet of the dying teacher. The scenes described are like stained glass windows; the Lord preaching in the centre, sinners repenting and saints listening, all in harmonious colours and studied postures. But the central figure remains somewhat aloof; when once he had begun his ministry he laboured uninterruptedly and with continual success, but the foundation of the kingdom of Righteousness seems less like the triumphant issue of a struggle than the passage through the world of some compassionate angel. This is in great part due to the fact that the Pitakas are works of edification. True, they set before us the teacher as well as his teaching but they speak of his doings and historical surroundings

only in order to provide a proper frame for the law which he preached. A less devout and more observant historian would have arranged the picture differently and even in the narratives that have come down to us there are touches of human interest which seem authentic.

When the Buddha was dying Ānanda wept because he was about to lose so kind a master and the Buddha's own language to him is even more affectionate. He cared not only for the organization of the order but for its individual members. He is frequently represented as feeling that some disciple needed a particular form of instruction and giving it. Nor did he fail to provide for the comfort of the sick and weary. For instance a ballad relates how Panthaka driven from his home took refuge at the door of the monastery garden. "Then came the Lord and stroked my head and taking me by the arm led me into the garden of the monastery and out of kindness he gave me a towel for my feet." A striking anecdote relates how he once found a monk who suffered from a disagreeable disease lying on the ground in a filthy state. So with Ānanda's assistance he washed him and lifting him up with his own hands laid him on his bed. Then he summoned the brethren and told them that if a sick brother had no special attendant the whole order should wait on him. "You, monks, have no mothers or fathers to care for you. If you do not wait one on the other, who is there who will wait on you? Whosoever would wait on me, he should wait on the sick." This last recalls Christ's words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these brethren, ye have done it unto me." And, if his approval of monks being deaf to the claims of family affection seems unfeeling, it should also be mentioned that in the book called *Songs of the Nuns* women relate how they were crazy at the loss of their children but found complete comfort and peace in his teaching. Sometimes we are told that when persons whom he wished to convert proved refractory he "suffused them with the feeling of his love" until they yielded to his influence. We can hardly doubt that this somewhat cumbrous phrase preserves a tradition of his personal charm and power.

The beauty of his appearance and the pleasant quality of his voice are often mentioned but in somewhat conventional terms which inspire no confidence that they are based on personal reminiscence, nor have the most ancient images which we possess any claim to represent his features, for the earliest of them are based on Greek models and it was not the custom to represent him by a figure until some centuries after his death. I can imagine that the truest idea of his person is to be obtained not from the abundant effigies which show him as a somewhat sanctimonious ascetic, but from statues of him as a young man, such as that found at Sarnath, which may possibly preserve not indeed the physiognomy of Gotama but the general physique of a young Nepalese prince, with powerful limbs and features and a determined mouth. For there is truth at the bottom of the saying that Gotama was born to be either a Buddha or a universal monarch: he would have made a good general, if he had not become a monk.

We are perhaps on firmer ground when we find speakers in the Pitakas commenting on his calm and bright expression and his unruffled courtesy in discussion. Of his eloquence it is hard to judge. The Suttas may preserve his teaching and some of his words but they are probably rearrangements made for recitation. Still it is impossible to prove that he did not himself adopt this style, particularly when age and iteration had made the use of certain formulæ familiar to him. But though these repetitions and subdivisions of arrangement are often wearisome, there are not wanting traces of another manner, which suggest a terse and racy preacher going straight to the point and driving home his meaning with homely instances.

Humour often peeps through the Buddha's preaching. It pervades the Jātaka stories, and more than once he is said to have smiled when remembering some previous birth. Some suttas, such as the tales of the Great King of Glory, and of King Mahā Vijita's sacrifice, are simply Jātakas in another form—interesting stories full of edification for those who can understand but not to be taken as a narrative of facts. At other times he simply states the ultimate facts of a case and leaves them in their droll incongruity. Thus when King Ajātasattu was moved and illuminated by his teaching, he observed to his disciples that His Majesty had all the makings of a saint in him, if only he had not killed that excellent man his own father. Somewhat similar is his judgment on two naked ascetics, who imitated in all things the ways of a dog and a cow respectively, in the hope of thus obtaining salvation. When pressed to say what their next birth

would be, he opined that if their penance was successful they would be reborn as dogs and cows, if unsuccessful, in hell. Irony and modesty are combined in his rejection of extravagant praise. "Such faith have I, Lord" said Sâriputta, "that methinks there never has been nor will be nor is now any other greater or wiser than the Blessed One." "Of course, Sâriputta" is the reply, "you have known all the Buddhas of the past." "No, Lord." "Well then, you know those of the future." "No, Lord." "Then at least you know me and have penetrated my mind thoroughly." "Not even that, Lord." "Then why, Sâriputta, are your words so grand and bold."

There is much that is human in these passages yet we should be making a fancy portrait did we allow ourselves to emphasize them too much and neglect the general tone of the Pitakas. These scriptures are the product of a school; but that school grew up under the Buddha's personal influence and more than that is rooted in the very influences and tendencies which produced the Buddha himself. The passionless, intellectual aloofness; the elemental simplicity with which the facts of life are stated and explained without any concession to sentiment, the rigour of the prescription for salvation, that all sensual desire and attachment must be cut off, are too marked and consistent for us to suppose them due merely to monkish inability to understand the more human side of his character. The Buddha began his career as an Indian Muni, one supposed to be free from all emotions and intent only on seeking deliverance from every tie connecting him with the world. This was expected of him and had he done no more it would have secured him universal respect. The fact that he did a great deal more, that he devoted his life to active preaching, that he offered to all happiness and escape from sorrow, that he personally aided with advice and encouragement all who came to him, caused both his contemporaries and future generations to regard him as a saviour. His character and the substance of his teaching were admirably suited to the needs of the religious world of India in his day. Judged by the needs of other temperaments, which are entitled to neither more nor less consideration, they seem too severe, too philosophic and the later varieties of Buddhism have endeavoured to make them congenial to less strenuous natures.

Before leaving the personality of the Buddha, we must say a word about the more legendary portions of his biography, for though of little importance for history they have furnished the chief subjects of Buddhist art and influenced the minds of his followers as much as or more than the authentic incidents of his career. The later legend has not distorted the old narrative. It is possible that all its incidents may be founded on stories known to the compilers of the Pitakas, though this is not at present demonstrable, but they are embellished by an unstinted use of the supernatural and of the hyperbole usual in Indian poetry. The youthful Buddha moves through showers of flowers and an atmosphere crowded with attendant deities. He cannot even go to school without an escort of ten thousand children and a hundred thousand maidens and astonishes the good man who proposes to teach him the alphabet by suggesting sixty-four systems of writing.

The principal scenes in this legend are as follows. The Bodhisattva, that is the Buddha to-be, resides in the Tusita Heaven and selects his birth-place and parentage. He then enters the womb of his mother Mâyâ in the shape of a white elephant, which event she sees in a dream. Brahmans are summoned and interpret the vision to mean that her son will be a Universal Monarch or a Buddha. When near her confinement Mâyâ goes to visit her parents but on the way brings forth her son in the Lumbini grove. As she stands upright holding the bough of a tree, he issues from her side without pain to her and is received by deities, but on touching the ground, takes seven steps and says, "I am the foremost in the world." On the same day are born several persons who play a part in his life—his wife, his horse, Ânanda, Bimbisâra and others. Asita does homage to him, as does also his father, and it is predicted that he will become a Buddha and renounce the world. His father in his desire to prevent this secludes him in the enjoyment of all luxury. At the ploughing festival he falls into a trance under a tree and the shadow stands still to protect him and does not change. Again his father does him homage. He is of herculean strength and surpasses all as an archer. He marries his cousin Yasodharâ, when sixteen years old. Then come the four visions, which are among the scenes most frequently depicted in modern sacred art. As he is driving in the palace grounds the gods show him an

old man, a sick man, a corpse and a monk of happy countenance. His charioteer explains what they are and he determines to abandon the world. It was at this time that his son was born and on hearing the news he said that a new fetter now bound him to worldly life but still decided to execute his resolve. That night he could take no pleasure in the music of the singing women who were wont to play to him and they fell asleep. As he looked at their sleeping forms he felt disgust and ordered Channa, his charioteer, to saddle Kaṇṭhaka, a gigantic white horse, eighteen cubits long from head to tail. Meanwhile he went to his wife's room and took a last but silent look as she lay sleeping with her child.

Then he started on horseback attended by Channa and a host of heavenly beings who opened the city gates. Here he was assailed by Māra the Tempter who offered him universal empire but in vain. After jumping the river Anomā on his steed, he cut off his long hair with his sword and flinging it up into the air wished it might stay there if he was really to become a Buddha. It remained suspended; admiring gods placed it in a heavenly shrine and presented Gotama with the robes of a monk.

Not much is added to the account of his wanderings and austerities as given in the Pitakas, but the attainment of Buddhahood naturally stimulates the devout imagination. At daybreak Gotama sits at the foot of a tree, lighting up the landscape with the golden rays which issue from his person. Sujârâ a noble maiden and her servant Pûrṇâ offer him rice and milk in a golden vessel and he takes no more food for seven weeks. He throws the vessel into the river, wishing that if he is to become a Buddha it may ascend the stream against the current. It does so and then sinks to the abode of the Nâgas. Towards evening he walks to the Bodhi-tree and meets a grass-cutter who offers him grass to make a seat. This he accepts and taking his seat vows that rather than rise before attaining Buddhahood, he will let his blood dry up and his body decay. Then comes the great assault of the Tempter. Māra attacks him in vain both with an army of terrible demons and with bands of seductive nymphs. During the conflict Māra asked him who is witness to his ever having performed good deeds or bestowed alms? He called on the earth to bear witness. Earthquakes and thunders responded to the appeal and the goddess of the Earth herself rose and bore testimony. The rout of Māra is supposed to have taken place in the late evening. The full moon came out and in the three watches of the night he attained enlightenment.

The Pali and early Sanskrit texts place the most striking legendary scenes in the first part of the Buddha's life just as scribes give freest rein to their artistic imagination in tracing the first letter and word of a chapter. In the later version, the whole text is coloured and gilded with a splendour that exceeds the hues of ordinary life but no incidents of capital importance are added after the Enlightenment. Historical names still occur and the Buddha is still a wandering teacher with a band of disciples, but his miracles continually convulse the universe: he preaches to mankind from the sky and retires for three months to the Tusita Heaven in order to instruct his mother, who had died before she could hear the truth from her son's lips, and often the whole scene passes into a vision where the ordinary limits of space, time and number cease to have any meaning.

Charles Eliot. *Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch*. Vol. 3. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1921.

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